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Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CU-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 EB-08 CA-01 SCS-06 DLOS-09 CG-00
DOTE-00 TRSE-00 COME-00 OES-07 ACDA-12 /121 W
----------119023 131017Z /16
P 130952Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7042
AMCONSUL NAHA PRIORITY
INFO USLO PEKING PRIORITY
OAC CAMP BUTLER OKINAWA JA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB JA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 06393

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, EFIS, JA, CH
SUBJECT: SINO-JAPANESE RELATIONS -- FISHING IN TROUBLED WATERS

REF: TOKYO 6361

SUMMARY: CHINESE FISHING FLEET INCURSION INTO WATERS OFF SENKAKUS HAS PROVOKED CONSTERNATION AS WELL AS CONFUSION AS TO PRC MOTIVES. ONE LIKELY EFFECT WILL BE FURTHER TO COMPLICATE PROSPECTS FOR PFT. END SUMMARY

1. ON MORNING APRIL 12, APPROXIMATELY 100 CHINESE FISHING BOATS WERE SPOTTED BY JAPANESE MARITIME SAFETY
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AGENCY PATROL BOAT CONDUCTING FISHING OPERATIONS IN WATERS OFF JAPANESE-CLAIMED SENKAKU ISLANDS. PATROL BOAT ORDERED CHINESE TO LEAVE, WHEREUPON CHINESE PRODUCED SIGNS TO EFFECT THAT AS CHINESE THEY HAD RIGHT TO FISH WITHIN CHINESE TERRITORIAL WATERS. BY EVENING APRIL 12, ALL CHINESE FISHING VESSELS HAD LEFT DISPUTED WATERS, BUT REPORTEDLY RETURNED EARLY MORNING OF APRIL 13.

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2. ACCORDING TO CONGEN BAHA, INCIDENT HAS RECEIVED MAJOR ATTENTION IN OKINAWA PRESS AND POLITICAL CIRCLES. HOWEVER, THERE HAS BEEN NO EDITORIAL COMMENT AS YET, PROBABLY BECAUSE LEFTIST OKINAWA PRESS CANNOT DECIDE WHAT TO MAKE OF THIS ASSERTIVE ACTION ON PART OF COUNTRY THOUGHT TO BE FRIENDLY TO JAPAN. CONGEN ALSO REPORTS OKINAWAN RUMOR THAT AT LEAST HALF OF CHINESE VESSELS WERE ARMED WITH MACHINE GUNS. OKINAWAN OBSERVERS REPORTEDLY BELIEVE CHINESE BOATS WERE NOT CONFIGURED FOR SERIOUS FISHING, REINFORCING SUSPICION THERE THAT FLEET'S PURPOSE WAS TO MAKE POLITICAL POINT.

3. PRESENCE OF PRC BOATS CAUGHT GOJ BY SURPRISE. PM FUKUDA TOLD PRESS AFTERNOON APRIL 12 HE THOUGHT IT STRANGE THAT THEY SHOULD BE THERE. FONMIN SONODA REAFFIRMED JAPANESE CLAIM TO SENKAKUS IN STATEMENT TO DIET APRIL 13, AND SAID JAPANESE EMBASSY PEKING HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO MAKE OFFICIAL INQUIRY. HE ALSO REPORTEDLY SAID JAPAN WAS WATCHING SITUATION"WITH GRAVE CONCERN." GOJ SENT ADDITIONAL PATROL BOATS TO AREA, INCLUDING AT LEAST ONE WITH INTERPRETER ABOARD, AND HAVE MAINTAINED AERIAL SURVEILLANCE.

4. MOFA CHINA DIVISION DEPDIR SAID APRIL 13 HE TOO WAS UNSURE WHAT TO MAKE OF INCIDENT. HE ADDED THAT IT HAD CONFIDENTIAL

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ALREADY PROVIDED AMMUNITION FOR PRO-TAIPEI MEMBERS IN DIET. CHINA DIVISION WAS BUSY PREPARING ANSWERS TO DIET QUESTIONS EXPECTED LATER IN DAY, E.G., WHY HAS GOJ NOT MOVED TO SEIZE VESSELS?

5. COMMENT: WHILE WE SHARE GOJ PUZZLEMENT AS TO CHINESE MOTIVE, ONE CLUE MAY LIE IN INTRA-LDP DEBATE OVER PAST THREE WEEKS ON SINO-JAPANESE PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP TREATY. ANTI-TREATY DIETMEN, INCLUDING FACTION LEADER NAKASONE (REFTEL), HAVE REPEATEDLY ARGUED THAT BEFORE GOJ REOPENS FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS ON PFT, ISSUE OF SENKAKUS SHOULD BE CLARIFIED.

6. IT APPEARS CHINESE MAY BE ATTEMPTING CLARIFICATION OF THEIR OWN, WITH POSSIBLE SIGNAL AS WELL RE PRC ATTITUDE TOWARD JAPAN-KOREAN CONTINENTAL SHELF AGREEMENT AND IMPLEMENTING LEGISLATION NOW PENDING IN UPPER HOUSE. WHILE SONODA AND OHIRA REPORTEDLY HAVE ARGUED THAT INCIDENT UNDERSCORES NEED FOR PFT, CHINESE ACTION IS LIKELY TO STRENGTHEN HAND OF PFT OPPONENTS, FURTHER DIMMING PROSPECTS FOR EARLY RESUMPTION OF TALKS. MANSFIELD

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Message Attributes

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Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
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Concepts: TERRITORIAL WATERS, DISPUTES, FISHING BOATS
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Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
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